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IT SHINES FOR ALL

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POETRY.

DOWN-TOWN AT MIDNIGHT.

It is not often you may see a giant fast asleep—
So come with me, and you shall have a slyly stolen peep:
This monster, now in rest profound, is known in books, as *Trade*,
And if you'd view his giant form, come when his couch is laid.
Unlike his slaves, who work all day, and restless toss all night—
He gets him down among his wares, and sleeps 'till morning light.

Lo, here he lies—with arms outstretched—his pulses cold and still—
Hushed all those throbbing floods of life, which thro' them, waking, thrill—
Wall street, the centre of his power, lies quiet as the dead;
Nor wakes one single echo here, of all that mighty tread
Which daily thunders o'er her ways, when giant Trade's "on 'Change,"
And Bulls and Bears in mortal strife each others plans derange.

Gone are the Brokers from their Board; the Banks are silent all;
The great Rotunda answers not to Auctioneers' call;
Deserted every lawyer's chair,—no clients to defend—
Gone, all the money borrowers,—gone all the men who lend;
Then *Sugar men*, who *bear a load*, no longer now—we see—
Who "wish the fashion would come round of drinking sweeter Tea."

Front street and Water make no sound; Grocers,—O where are they?
Sometimes at Brown's; but now, alas! they haven't gone that way.
The "Journal" Bulletin's a blank,—void of the last quotations,—
Flour may be up or *down*—who knows?—among the foreign nations.
Who knows the price of cotton now; how does the war cloud roll?
What is the last arrival from the North, or Southern Pole?

O'er South street, too, this lethargy has spread its potent spell,
And white robed commerce folds her wings, and takes her rest full well.
Trade sleeps in every vein and nerve; and quiet broods around.
But hark! from distant wayside path, what means that sluggish sound?
See—morning glimmers from the East;—his pulses gently heave;
The monster's surely waking up!—perhaps we'd better leave.—*Jour. Com.*

MISCELLANEOUS.

SIDNEY GREY;

A TALE OF

SCHOOL LIFE.

By the Author of "Mia and Charlie."

All these explanations took time. It was late when they set out for their walk, late when they came into dinner, and late, too late, for the post when Amy finished her letter to her father. She met Sidney and Edward re-entering the garden as she returned after a fruitless chase down the road to overtake the postman.

"Is it not provoking?" she said to Sidney; "the mail goes out to-morrow, and papa will have to wait a whole month for his letters. Well, after all, they would not have given him much pleasure. I don't know what you have said; but I could not give a good account of us. Oh, Sidney! this has been such an unsatisfactory day. Come and take a turn in the garden with me, for I want to talk to you. You look tired and vexed yourself; I dare say something has been going wrong at school with Edward. Now, tell the truth, for I hate people to say comforting things that they don't mean. Don't you think, in looking back on the six weeks we have spent here, that we are all going on as badly as possible?"

"It is our own fault, I suppose, if we are," said Sidney, with a sigh.

"As if that were not just the worst part of it," said Amy.

"Why, no; I suppose it would be still worse if it were some one else's, and we could not do anything to help ourselves."

"I believe I had rather," Amy began; "but you will say that it is all laziness. After all, it's very well to say *we* and *our* fault; but how many things go wrong that I cannot mend. If you knew what a day I have had; if you had any idea of Sarah's fidgetiness and Charlotte's domineering—listen how loudly she is talking now—and Frank's tiresome, sly ways, and the gossiping and quarreling, you would not wonder that I am in despair."

"I don't," said Sidney; "only do you think it does any good to bring every one's faults up, and look at them in that despairing way? You said you hated people to say comforting things. Am I to hold my tongue, or shall we sit down and grumble together?"

"I am not exaggerating," said Amy.

"But don't you think it is a sort of exaggeration to heap all one's difficulties together, and look at them at once? It certainly prevents our finding any way out of them as effectually as Frank prevents himself from finding his slate-pencil, when he does not want to do his sum, by turning his things over and over in his drawer, and then saying that there is no use in looking for it."

"Well," said Amy, after a minute's silence, "I have changed my mind. You may straighten the drawer for me, Sidney, and pull out one difficulty at a time, as you do Frank's lesson-books when you are making him find his pencil."

"Suppose we begin by talking of the things that we could cure ourselves."

"We scarcely need talk of them," said Amy, sadly; "I know them well enough. I know exactly how much of the confusion is my fault; I know that it is my indolence, and forgetfulness, and selfishness, and"——

"The drawer again," said Sidney. "I'll tell you something, Amy. I believe it is just as foolish for people like you and me to exaggerate our faults until we make ourselves despair, as it is for other people to be always excusing themselves; at least, papa has often said so to me when I used to talk about myself as you are doing now. He never would let me go on accusing myself in that vague sort of way."

"What am I to do then?" said Amy. "You won't let me talk about other people's faults, or my own."

"If you could think of something to do, some little thing to begin with, that would give to-morrow a chance of being better than to-day. I could tell you of one, only I am afraid you won't much like it."

"Getting up earlier, I suppose," said Amy, with a sigh. "That certainly would prevent my being so hurried and bewildered; but if you knew how tired I am every morning"—

"You seemed so sorry just now, when you said you were so indolent. Don't you think it is almost—"

"Insincere to talk of being sorry for a fault, and then to do nothing to cure one's self of it? I suppose it is. Well, I will try, then; my getting up in time will certainly prevent some confusion. But, Sidney, I must go back to the other troubles. It won't prevent Frank from being greedy, and Charlotte from quarreling with Sarah. I don't know what do about that; I am sure I talk to her enough."

"There are two ways of talking to people, you know," said Sidney; "I know you have tried one."

"Do you mean that I have set Charlotte a bad example by not obeying Sarah myself about those brown Holland chairs? I have noticed that you always attend to Sarah's tiresome rules; and certainly the children pay some sort of attention to what you say. I wish I had taken the right side that night; I had no idea then that there would be all this quarreling about it. It is very difficult to go back now. Oh, Sidney! people talk of conquering faults as if it were such an easy thing to do."

"I don't," said Sidney; "but don't you think that is worse still to talk as if it were impossible to do it, considering" ——

"Considering what?"

"That we have not it all to do ourselves," said Sidney, in a low voice; "that Jesus Christ died to save us from our sins. Don't you think it seems ungrateful, after that, to talk as if we could not possibly do it?"

"Yes," said Amy; "I don't think I should be so ready to give up if I believed that properly. Well, I am glad this letter I have been writing did not go to papa; by next month I will try to be in a humor to write a more cheerful one."

While Amy and Sidney were having this grave talk, Charlotte was hearing the events of the day from Edward. "Well," she said, the instant she saw him, "bad or good?"

"Bad," said Edward.

"I might have known that by your face," said Charlotte. "So you were late again?"

"Sidney was. He never will let me wait for him, that's the worst of it. He says that I've no right to dawdle, and lose half my school-lesson, because he can't walk as fast as other people. He has to come into the school-room all alone, and then, of course, every one turns round and stares."

"I should wait for him," said Charlotte, "whether he liked it or not, for the principle of the thing."

"As if that would not be the very way to make him care more. I wish I had waited this morning, however."

"So Dr. Wise actually did it to Sidney? The tyrant! Edward, I see how it is. The hour has come; we must do or die. We must strike for our liberty, or be forever slaves."

"Slaves!" said Edward.

"Yes, slaves! Sarah and Dr. Wise are both, as you see plainly, despots; and if we submit to despots we shall be slaves. I, for one, am ready to give my life for the cause of freedom. You know, in Rollin's 'Ancient History,' the Spartans used to say—but I don't remember the exact words. It does not matter, the example is the thing; and I have resolved that it shall not be lost upon us. We will raise the standard of freedom, and this shall be our motto—'*Liberty and Our Own Chairs.*' Let us think of Brutus, Edward, and strike."

"Whom?" said Edward.

"Oh! you are so matter-of-fact Edward. I did not mean any one in particular. I meant that we were to strike for our freedom as people did in Ancient History." And Charlotte took a turn up and down the grass-plot, quoting poetry and waving her handkerchief:—

"Weave the warp and weave the woof,
The winding-sheet of Sarah's race;
Give ample ——"

"Winding-sheet!" interrupted Edward, aghast. "But you don't expect me to kill—"

"Kill!" cried Charlotte indignantly. "It is an odd thing, Edward, but you never do seem to understand one when one is speaking figuratively."

"But you said something about Brutus," said Edward.

"Of course I did," said Charlotte. "People always do when they talk of resisting tyrants. Of course, I said figuratively, that we were to imitate Brutus. You must know what that means."

"No, I don't," said Edward. "I don't know how to imitate Brutus figuratively. I wish you would tell me what you expect me actually to do, and whether I am to begin with Sarah or Dr. Wise."

"Actually to do! Oh! that's another thing," said Charlotte. "But why does one read Ancient History, I wonder, or learn the Lays of Ancient Rome, if it is not to teach one to fight against tyrants—of course, as I said before, in a figurative way?"

"The worst of it is," said Edward, "that I am not quite sure whether Dr. Wise is a tyrant after all. Sidney says (and I believe he is right), that it would be far worse for him if Dr. Wise made any great difference between him and the others. It would be noticed directly, for Collins has taken a spite against us both because I knocked him down at the station. If he would only fight it out at once I should not mind; but he won't. He pretends to look down on me, because I'm in the lower school, so that I have never had a fair chance of making him hold his tongue; and then there's a great, stupid butcher's son, called Wycombe, who has taken it into his head that Sidney is a favorite, and he takes every opportunity he can get of saying jeering things, and playing malicious tricks. He shall not have many more—that's one comfort."

"Well, then, he is another tyrant to fight against," said Charlotte. "He'll do instead of Dr. Wise."

"Better," said Edward, "for I can tell you that I shan't fight *him* in a figurative way."

"Oh!" said Charlotte, "I am afraid you have been fighting really already. That is the reason your jacket is torn, and that you have got that great lump on your head, that you are trying to hide with your cap. How does Sidney like your fighting about him? He looks dreadfully tired and out of sorts to-night."

"He does not like it at all. That's just the worst of it. He has such notions. I believe he had rather bear anything than have me go into a passion. Would you believe it? Every day this week, while I and Lyon have been out of the way in the cricket-field, Wycombe and his set of fellows have been plaguing Sidney, hunting him up into corners, and forcing him to eat pieces of raw meat and candle-ends; and he never told me, though he knows that there is nothing that I should like better than to pay them out—nothing that I should like better."

"Sidney has odd notions about paying people out for things," said Charlotte. "Do you know, Edward, that sometimes his way of reading parts of the lessons at prayers, makes me feel almost sorry that I have plagued Sarah all day; and yet I have no doubt about her, as you have about Dr. Wise. She is a greater tyrant than Xerxes, or any of the Persian kings; and I think you and I should be quite justified in imitating Hannibal, and swearing never to sheath the sword till—"

"Tea's ready," interrupted Frank; "and you had better be quick, for we are all going to drink tea in the drawing-room with Aunt Ellice. Sarah is taking up some buttered toast, and Aunt Ellice says she is going to tell us a story after tea."

CHAPTER VII.
AUNT ELLICE'S ROOM.

When Aunt Ellice was tolerably well, she generally sent for one or other of the children to spend an hour with her in the evening, which was her best time, and she contrived to make the hour so pleasant that it was looked forward to by every one, from Amy to Frank, as the best in the day. But this was the first time that they all had been invited to come together; and when Amy looked round the room, and saw what pains had been taken to give it its most inviting appearance, she began to think that their aunt had some especial motive for the invitation.

"What a very nice room yours is, Aunt Ellice; and what extremely nice buttered toast you always seem to have for tea," said Frank.

"Well, you must put all the disagreeable medicines I have to take against the buttered toast, Frank, before you make up your mind to wish to change places with me."

"I should not like the medicines," said Frank; "but I must say I do think that it would be rather nice to be ill. People always have such good things when they are ill, or when anything is the matter with them; and every one waits on them and makes a fuss with them."

"And they lose all the pleasure of waiting upon, and making a fuss with, other people," said Aunt Ellice. "Medicine against buttered toast again, Sidney."

"Medicine, indeed," said Sidney.

"For my part," said Charlotte, "I don't care for having nice things, or being made a fuss with. All that I care for, Aunt Ellice, is simply"—

"To have your own way," said Aunt Ellice, smiling.

"Oh! Aunt Ellice! that was not at all what I was going to say."

"Not what you were going to say, but the truth, perhaps," said Aunt Ellice. "Do you know, I sit quietly up here in my easy chair, and Charlotte pities me very much for knowing so little of what is going on in the house; and yet I fancy I know a good deal of what is passing in each of your hearts. I believe I know, without your telling me, what you all most care for."

"What do I care for most, Aunt Ellice?" asked Amy; "I don't think I know myself."

"You care, but I hope not *most* now, for being admired and praised. When you are doing anything, you are fond of imagining a little circle of admiring people round you, saying or thinking, 'How charming—how clever—how pretty—how good—how self-denying Amy is!'"

"Oh, aunt! am I so very vain?"

"Ask your own private fancies, Amy."

"What do I like best?" asked Frank.

"I am afraid you have told us yourself this evening, Frank. You like pleasant things—as much of everything good, and as little of anything disagreeable, as you can manage to get for yourself. As for Edward, he is wishing very much to know what I have found out about him; but he is too proud to ask, so I shall not tell him."

"Well, Aunt Ellice," said Charlotte, "I think mine is the shortest and most natural wish after all."

"Only, unluckily, you are very unlikely ever to have it. How many people in the world do you suppose have their own way? Do you think I have? Why, I cannot even please myself about moving from my sofa. I am very far from having 'liberty and my own chair.'"

"Oh, Aunt Ellice! did you hear that?"

"There are always birds of the air who carry the matter even to sick people in shut-up rooms; but now, Charlotte, let us arrange all the tea-cups in the tray as Sarah likes them to be placed, and Edward shall put the tray on the table outside the door, and then we will have our story."

"There is one question I should like to ask you first, Aunt Ellice," said Charlotte. "Why do you care so much about pleasing Sarah?"

"We will have the story first, and answer the question afterwards," said Aunt Ellice. "I am going to tell you a story about the time when your mamma and your Uncle Walter first came to live with me."

"Oh! I am so glad; you have never told us anything about mamma or Uncle Walter."

"I was not so old in those days as I am now," Aunt Ellice went on, "but I was not young; and I think I was even sadder and quieter, for I had just had a great sorrow. The house was as still and gloomy; the carpets and curtains did not look much fresher; and the same dark trees hung over the garden wall."

"And Sarah?" said Charlotte.

"Sarah did not live in the house then."

"Oh!" said Charlotte, with a sigh of relief.

"Did mamma and Uncle Walter like the house?" asked Amy.

"Not at first. They had been used to live in a beautiful old house by the sea, and to play all day on the shore. At first, they used to complain of the dark house and the rainy days; but your mamma, or little Helen, as we called her then, was not a person to be dull long anywhere. Very soon after she came, I used to be awakened as early in the morning as Charlotte wakes me now by the sound of her little feet pattering up and down stairs, or her voice in the garden talking to the dog. Every now and then she used to come and stand under one of the windows, and call, 'Walter, Walter, dear?' and then I used to hear another voice saying, 'Well, well, Helen, I'll come soon.' I was not long in finding out that Walter's *soon* and Helen's *soon* meant very different things."

"What was he doing that he did not come out to her?" asked Charlotte.

"He was generally lying curled up on the rug at the head of the stairs, seeing pictures in the polished oak floor, or else he was standing on the top step of the ladder, by the book-case, reading some book that he was too much interested in to wait till he had got down the ladder to go on with it."

"That is the way Amy reads," said Frank.

"But did they never play together?"

"Oh, yes! sometimes. And there was one time in the day when they were always sure to be together; it was the time you call the blind-man's holiday, when it is beginning to get dark. Then they used to go and sit on the top of the camphor wood chest that stands in the staircase window, and look out at the red lights in the sky, and the bright, flickering furnace-fires, which they could see quite plainly, when they looked down the road towards Hadleigh. I had been used to bright lights at night and red reflections in the sky, for so many years, that I had no idea of the impression they made on the children, or of the strange stories that Walter contrived to tell Helen about fire kings and salamanders, and palaces with walls of flame. Walter was quite satisfied to talk, but Helen wanted to see. About twenty times a day she used to come to my door and tap, and when I called out, 'What do you want, Helen?' it always was, 'I want to have the garden-gate opened. I want to go down the road towards Hadleigh.' 'But you must not go down the road,' I used to say, and then she would go away, and come and ask me again 5 minutes afterwards. If she had known as many fine words as Charlotte does, I think she would have raised the standard of freedom, and chosen for her motto, 'Leave to walk into one of the furnace-fires of Hadleigh.' Well, when people go on asking and wishing for forbidden things, there comes a time when they make up their minds to take them at all hazards, and it generally happens that an opportunity comes. So it was with little Helen. It happened that I had to go to London on business, for a day or two. There was no Sarah in the house then; the garden-gate was left open; and one evening, about twilight, little Helen persuaded Walter to leave the garden with her, and walk along the road towards the furnace-fires of Hadleigh. Walter would, perhaps, have been satisfied with going a very little way, for he was lazy, fonder of talking about having adventures than of going through with them, and, besides, he did not believe in his own stories quite so devoutly as his sister did. But Helen would not let him give up. She reminded him of all the boasts he had made of what he would do if he were once outside the garden gate, and, for very shame, he was obliged to enter into the spirit of the enterprise. Well, they went on, and the evening grew darker, and the bright lights of the fires shone out against the sky. At last, they came to a large building, on the outskirts of Hadleigh, where china is made. They saw a man coming through a doorway with a tray of unbaked cups on his head, and, curious to see what he would do with them, they followed him into the yard where the furnace or oven stood. It was a dark November evening; the people were busy finishing their day's work; and no one noticed the two children, as they stood hand-in-hand in the shade of the great oven.

"I must describe an oven to you, that you may understand the rest of my story. It is a round building, with a hole at the top; there is no fuel inside; the fire is conducted by flues from fireplaces ranged outside, and rises through gratings in the floor. At first there is only hot air and smoke, and then, as the fires outside grow hotter and hotter, bright jets of flame. The fires connected with the oven near which the children stood were just going to be lighted. The large earthenware jars, called sagars, in which the china is baked, were piled in circles inside the oven, and the firemen were busy bricking up the doorway, which would not be opened again until the china was baked. Helen and Walter watched him putting one brick on after another, and whistling as he worked. When the man left his work for a few minutes, and walked away to speak to a passer-by, the children came closer, and peeped in at the opening. It was nearly dark inside, for the fires were not yet lighted. There was nothing there, you will say, likely to tempt any one in; but Helen was tempted in. While she and Walter stood at the door, she saw a group of girls coming down the yard. Some of them were pupils at my Sunday school. Helen had often seen them, for they often came to my house to read in the evening, after their work in the manufactory was over. She felt afraid that one or other of them would recognise her, and take her home before she had seen all she wanted to see; and so she persuaded Walter to creep inside the door-way, and hide till the girls had passed. The children crept in among the piles of sagars, and there they were sure enough not to be seen. They sat down on the floor to wait until the girls had passed. The air inside the oven was hot and heavy, and they had walked a long way; they either fell asleep, or some kind of stupor came over them. At all events, they were spared the agony of finding out, as they must have done if they had remained conscious, that the man had returned to his work, the doorway was fastened up, the furnaces fired, and that they and the flames were shut in together—the flames to burst up higher and higher, till every brick in the oven glowed with white heat, and then to die out, and they"—

"Oh! aunt! how horrible! how horrible! Would no one come? Don't go on; I can't bear to hear it," cried Charlotte.

"How silly you are," said Frank. "Why, we know that mamma and Uncle Walter were not burned to death. Do go on, please, aunt, and tell us how they were saved."

"They were saved by the energy and courage of one of the young girls that worked in the manufactory. This girl was one of my scholars, and had often seen Helen at my house. She caught a glimpse of her standing by the oven that night; but as she saw nothing more of her when she came close to the place, and as it seemed extremely unlikely that she should be there, she imagined that her eyes must have deceived her, till she came home to this village and heard that the children were missing from my house. Then the idea struck her so forcibly that she could not put it away again, that the children had crept into the oven, and had been fastened up. Her friends and fellow-workmen, to whom she told her belief, laughed at her, and even the servants at my house refused to listen to her—it seemed such an improbable story, and there were so many other places where it seemed wiser to search for the children. The girl's father, who was the fireman, who had bricked up the oven, was very angry with her for persisting in her tale, and flatly refused to unbrick his oven, and risk the well-doing of his crockery for any such unfounded fancy. He had been there all the time, and he must know. This girl, however, was not a person to be turned from her purpose. She talked and scolded, and argued, and at last persuaded two of her fellow-workmen to go back with her to the yard. They had great difficulty in getting in, for no one would believe such a strange tale; but at last the girl's determination conquered. She assisted in pulling down the brickwork from the opening, and ran in first; there she found the two children still asleep. The air inside was not yet so much heated as to have done the children any injury, for it takes a long time for the fires to become thoroughly lighted; but little jets of smoke were beginning to rise up from under the gratings. A short time longer, and it would have been a very different burden that the brave factory-girl would have had to carry home in her arms, and I should never have been awakened again by little Helen's pattering feet on the staircase, or the sound of her voice singing in the garden. 'I took her out of the midst of the burning fiery furnace,' the girl said to me when I saw her; 'and I think the Lord must have been there with her, as He was with the three holy children whom you told us about last Sunday from the Bible.'"

"Aunt Ellice," interrupted Charlotte, "I should like to see that girl; I would go any where to see her. I am certain she is just the sort of person I should like. There is nothing I would not do for her."

"Nothing!" said Aunt Ellice in a tone of surprise. "What, Charlotte, would you sit on a chair covered with brown Holland, walk on little squares of oil-cloth, and even sometimes wipe your feet before you come in at the front door?"

"Ah, Charlotte, you are caught!" said Amy. "Now, I knew who the girl was the instant Aunt Ellice came to her in the story. It was Sarah."

"Sarah! *Oh!*" said Charlotte, with a very long breath.

"Did Sarah come to live with you directly after that?" asked Sidney.

"Very soon after. Helen never rested until she had persuaded me to take her to live here; and the last request she made me, as she stood in this room in her white bridal dress, all these years ago, was, that I would be kind to Sarah, and bear with her faults for Helen's sake. Do you wonder now, Charlotte, that I care about pleasing Sarah?"

"Aunt Ellice," said Amy, after all the children had remained silent for a few minutes, "there is one thing I want to say to you. Of course, you knew mamma and Uncle Walter best; but I can scarcely fancy that they ever were the sort of children you have been describing; that mamma, who was so gentle when we knew her, and so patient all that long time when she was ill, could ever have been self-willed and domineering and that Uncle Walter, the missionary, whom we have heard of so much, who has done so many self-denying things, and braved so many dangers, could ever have been that lazy, dreamy boy, fonder of talking than of doing, and spending his time in reading story-books as—as I do?"

"It is true, however, my dear; and perhaps, as you are going about this house, it may make it more interesting to you to remember that two other children have lived here, and struggled with the same faults that you have now to fight against, and sought and gained the help that is already for you as it was for them. They fought, and you have seen how they conquered; and now one is wearing the crown. You like to speak figuratively, Charlotte. Now, there is a figurative warfare in which I should very much like to see you engaged; and you need not go far—not further than your own heart—to find monsters and tyrants enough for you to struggle against."

"Aunt," said Charlotte, "tell me one thing. Do you think it possible for me ever to be as gentle and patient as mamma was?"

"Or for me," said Amy, "to conquer my laziness, and get to be as useful, and practical, and self-denying as Uncle Walter?"

"I do, my dear children," said Aunt Ellice, gently; "if you fight your enemies under the same banner, you will be sure to conquer. Shall I give you a motto, Charlotte, as you are fond of such things? 'The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God.' Now, I feel as if I had talked as long as I ought to do, and I have given you enough to think about for one night. You had better all go down and prepare to-morrow's lessons; and, Amy, you need not come up again. I have asked Sarah to help me to undress to-night, for I have a little story to tell her too."

"Edward," said Charlotte, as they went down stairs, "I very much like Aunt Ellice's way of talking about figurative fighting. You see I was not so very far wrong in what I said, though I did not put it in the right way. It will be fighting about Sarah still, though it will be with myself instead of her; and I shall not despair of having some day a struggle in a good cause with a real, live tyrant. In the mean time give me your jacket to mend, and let me put a piece of paper on that bump on your head."

What was the subject of Mrs. Ellice's story to Sarah, the children never found out, though Charlotte gave her aunt many broad hints about her curiosity on the subject; but two days after, to the astonishment of the whole house, the brown Holland covers disappeared from the four chairs; the squares of matting were taken from the dining-room; and Sidney found, to his, Edward's, and Charlotte's great relief, that he could walk up and down stairs without being followed by Sarah, with a little dust-pan and hand-brush in hand, to brush away the marks of his crutches on the carpet.

CHAPTER VIII.
FLOWER-SEEDS AND THISTLE-DOWN.

For some time after Edward's battle with Wycombe, of which Charlotte had had a hint, Sidney's position in the school was very much improved. The affair had come to Lyon's ears, and he had bestowed great praise on the little town boy's pluck, and shown more interest than he had ever before been known to take in the concerns of a town boy. He asked Wycombe, before a large circle of his retainers, whether he did or did not know that the Greys were his friends, and further increased his discomfiture by producing, on the only vacant place in the school wall, a new and striking caricature, in which Wycombe was represented weighing out meat in his father's shop, while a boy with a hatchet was about to cut off his hand, being supposed to mistake it for a piece of raw meat. Of course, such wit as this could not be without its effect on public opinion. The tide of favor for a time set in against Wycombe; and, instead of its being a favorite joke among the stupidest of the town boys to ask Sidney after his dog Toby, they amused themselves by calling out Butcher whenever they were beyond the reach of Wycombe's arm, and by pretending, when he was not looking, to turn away in disgust, and dislike to touch anything that passed through his hands.

Sidney was about the only one in the school who did not applaud the caricature, or adopt the nick-name. He was even heard to reprove Dudding for using it; and when Collins asked him his opinion of the caricature as a work of art, though Lyon was standing by, looking eager and red, as he always did whenever any of his productions were canvassed, he actually had the ingratitude, or the truthfulness, to say that he did not see any particular wit in laughing at a boy because his father happened to keep a shop, and that he did not think the likeness nearly so striking as every one else said it was.

Lyon cut pens to pieces while the discussion went on, and said, 'Pshaw! Of course, it was badly done—a thing dashed off in a minute. Of course he made no pretensions to draw as well as Grey did. Why did Collins always make a fuss? and Collins winked mysteriously at his friends, and whispered about fools who could not keep friends when they had made them, and courtiers who always stroked the Lion's mane the wrong way.

It would take up too much time to relate as minutely as we have hitherto done the events of the next few weeks; how Amy came down too early for breakfast every day for a week after her aunt's story, then fell back again into old habits, and had many rises and falls before she began steadily to improve; how Charlotte bit her tongue several times in trying to repress pert answers to Sarah; how Sidney was constantly getting nearly to the top of his classes, and then making some unnecessary remark, and being sent to the bottom for talking; and how Edward, as soon as he was relieved from his real anxiety for Sidney, invented a pet grievance to talk to Charlotte about. We prefer giving our readers an idea of Sidney's life at school, and the characters of some of his new companions, by recording the history of a certain bright, breezy, autumn day, when the air was full (as one sees it on such days) of little winged seeds, which the wind carried and lodged each in the best place for bringing the fruit, be it weed or flower, to perfection; and when certain other seeds were floating about too, not visible to the eye, but as certain as any barbed and winged seed of them all to find fit soil, and to bring forth the fruit folded within it. Such seeds are sown every day. Words are the seeds, and the soils on which they fall are people's hearts. We generally heed them as little as we do the floating thistle-down; but we are going to mark one or two that were blown about on that autumn day, and notice where they fell, and how they sank in and flourished.

The dinner is just over, and the boys are flocking out into the playground behind the house. They have not settled yet to their games; they are standing about in little groups, or hustling each other in the doorway. Eager voices rise higher and higher; it is the hour in the day when the word seeds are flying about the most plentifully. From a group of lower schoolboys rise ominous sounds of discontent. Wycombe's voice is heard loud above the others, and some subject of common interest seems to have drawn the circle together, for all are listening eagerly.

"I told you some one sneaks," Wycombe is saying; "I tell you I am certain of it. Old Folly could not know what we do in the town unless some one told him. Martin see us indeed! Martin is as blind as a bettle. No, no; don't tell"—

"I don't think any one dare sneak," said one of the bystanders. "Lyon would not trouble himself to tell tales of us, and the others dare not."

"I know some one who dares; some one who is a favorite; some one who is always poking about; some one I hate," said the orator, rising in eloquence and indignation as he went on.

"Do you mean Sidney Grey?" said one and another; "but that's not a bit likely. He is lame; he could not follow us about; and, besides, he was at home ill the day it happened."

"Oh! don't tell me," said Wycombe; "can't people sham being ill? Can't people hide in houses, and peep out at windows? Is not Dudding's house close to the apple-woman's stall? Is not Grey always going there? and is it not as likely as not that he was looking out of a window, and saw us when we knocked the stall over and helped ourselves to the apples?"

"I say, I say, I say," cried a little boy, eager to throw in his mite of information; "this morning I saw Sidney Grey speaking to the apple woman, and I believe he gave her a shilling."

"There now, did not I tell you?" cried Wycombe, enchanted with such a decided piece of evidence. "There's a fellow for you! there's a sneak! Gets the whole story out of the apple woman, and comes straight off here, and tells the Doctor"—

"But the Doctor knew last night," objected some provokingly reasonable person.

"Oh! don't tell me," said Wycombe; "what is the use of talking? We are all to be caned on Thursday; and we have been spied upon and tell-taled about; and I say that the spy and the tell-tale is Sidney Grey; contradict me if you like."

But the risk of contradicting Wycombe was what no one liked; so, having proved his opinion to his own satisfaction, and exhausted his powers of eloquence, he wiped his hot face with his handkerchief, and sauntered down the playground in search of some little boy to tease; and the others dispersed, each with a seed of suspicion and dislike sown in his mind, and each saying to himself, "Well, to be sure, one never knows the truth about any one. Who would have thought of Sidney Grey turning out a spy and a tell-tale?"

In a quieter part of the playground Lyon was walking slowly beside Sidney, reading to him a copy of verses, which he himself considered to be "not so very bad," and which his friends Collins, Foster, and Harding had pronounced to be *stunning*. Sidney's praise was more discriminating, and Lyon valued it accordingly. As he finished his last and best line he looked up for applause; but he had the mortification to see that Sidney was not attending—he was listening to some noise that came from a crowd of small boys at the bottom of the playground.

"Hark!" he said; "there is some one crying out."

"Oh! never mind," said Lyon; "it is only the usual row that goes on whenever the cake woman comes. I should have thought you would be used to it after being here six weeks. It's only Wycombe, and King, and half-a-dozen more, amusing themselves by levying black mail—bullying the little fellows out of half their toffee and fruit. Sometimes one or two, with a little more pluck than the rest, refuse to pay quietly, and then there is a row."

"Lyon," said Sidney, with a sudden flash of indignation in his gentle eyes, "I would not be you."

"*You* would not be *me*?" cried Lyon; and he stopped short, for a sudden comparison between himself, in his vigorous health, strength, and popularity, and Sidney, with his pale face, and shrunken, helpless figure, made him generously regret the stress he had laid on the pronouns.

"No," said Sidney, firmly; "I would not be you, the strongest and most influential person here, where all sorts of injustice and oppression are allowed to go on. I should be afraid."

"Afraid!" said Lyon, catching first at the offensive word. "Well, I'm afraid of nothing." Then, after a moment's thought, he added, "But I don't see why you should be afraid. I should have thought the fear would be the other way. Do you mean you should be afraid of what Dr. Wise would think of you?"

"No," said Sidney; and then he was silent for a minute. It required an effort to say what was in his mind, for this was the first time that he had ever spoken in public the name that was in all his thoughts. "I was not thinking of Dr. Wise. I meant I should be afraid of what God would think of me when He saw me tolerating what he hates."

"Well," said Lyon, after he had stood still for some minutes, knocking the fallen leaves about with a hickory stick he had in his hand, "after all I don't see what you mean by saying that to me. *I* am not a tyrant or a bully. I never do anything unjust; at least, not unless I'm in a very great passion; and every now and then, when I've time to attend to it, I interfere and give some of those fellows a thrashing to keep them within bounds. But if I were to be always troubling myself about every little whining fellow who can't take care of himself and fight his own battles, I should have no peace; I should be making myself every one's servant."

"You would be making yourself what they all call you, *King* Lion," said Sidney, smiling. "Greatest of all, you know, and servant of all."

"I don't know indeed," said Lyon. "That's not my idea of being king, I can tell you; and as for the rest, I acknowledge that the school is in a bad state, and, as I am head-monitor, I suppose I ought to do something to improve it; but those town boys are such a set of vulgar fellows, and it is so disagreeable to be mixed up with them, and, besides, I declare that I do as much as any one has a right to expect."

"That depends on what you mean by *any one*," said Sidney.

"What do you mean by that?" asked Lyon.

"I mean that it is one thing to do as we expect ourselves, and perhaps, quite another to do as God expects us."

"You take it so seriously," said Lyon in a slightly offended tone; "and, after all, you don't know what you are talking about. We shall see what good you will do when you are head-monitor, as you will be soon, when you have left off asking Wise questions that he can't answer."

"I can't do what you could," said Sidney; "but I shall try and do something."

"A new broom," said Lyon, contemptuously; and then, changing his tone, he added, "I seriously advise you not to interfere; you will do yourself harm, and no one else any good. If you were to go up this minute to Wycombe, and speak to him about his practices, he would answer you by knocking you down, and the mean-spirited little fellows you had been trying to defend, would laugh at you as you got up, to curry favor with him. I know them well enough. That is just all the good you would do."

"I would do it even if I were sure that were all."

"Then you would be a fool," said Lyon, hastily, as if to put a stop to a conversation that was beginning to be painful to him. "Well, if you are not in a humor to read any more, I may as well go. Collins and Foster are waiting for me to play at hockey."

"Oh! here you are Lyon," said Collins, as the King sauntered up after having watched Sidney's progress across the playground, till he was joined by Dudding and Edward; "here you are. I am glad to see that you have left Grey to take care of himself this one afternoon. You have quite cut us lately. Foster and I and Harding were just saying now what a pity it was; but somehow or other, you are not half the fellow you were."

"Oh, indeed! thank you," said Lyon, in a dry, hurt tone, which was just what Collins hoped to hear.

"We were saying what a pity it was," Collins went on, "for you know you are, in reality, the jolliest fellow; and it is a thousand pities to see you moping always with a regular sap like Grey."

"Can't a fellow go with whom he chooses?" said Lyon. "Can't you let me alone?"

"No, because we can't do anything without you: and you know that very well. We were looking for you just now to settle about that plan—the trick, you know, that you promised to play off on old Martin."

"I did not promise," said Lyon; "I only said I could if I liked."

"Well, and of course you like; we all like," said Harding.

"Except Grey," said Foster; "and he sat as glum as possible while Lyon was talking about it—would not laugh even. For my part, I think it is a great piece of impertinence for a fellow, a new fellow, a fellow who lives in the town, to set up to have different ideas about right and wrong, and that sort of thing, from what we have."

"What surprises me about Grey," said Collins, with a wink across at Foster, "is, that he is so ungrateful to Lyon, and actually seems to look down upon him."

"Ungrateful! Looks down upon *me*! What do you mean?" said Lyon, sharply.

"Oh! you don't choose to see it," Collins continued; "everybody else does. It is as plain as possible. Does not he often take upon himself to look grave at your jokes? and did not he find fault with your caricature? and did not he say, only yesterday, that half the lines in your poem were too short?"

"Well, they are short," said Lyon.

"It is not very like a friend to be the first to point it out, I think," said Collins; "but, after all, it is his general way of talking—a sort of thing one can't express. He said something, too, one day, about your not being quite a gentleman, or something of that sort."

"Whom did he say it to?" asked Lyon, with the true lion-like flash in his dark eyes, which it was Collins's great amusement to call forth.

"Oh! to Dudding or some one."

"Pshaw!" said Lyon turning away.

"Let us send for Grey to answer for himself," said a good-natured boy, called Wilson. "There he is; I saw him pass a minute ago with Dudding."

"Pray don't disturb him," said Collins. "He is much better employed in comforting his dear friend after the scrape he got into this morning. You have heard, have not you, what a row there was before dinner in the lower school? By-the-by, Lyon, what a fine tale Dudding must be telling about you just now to Grey?"

"What have I to do with Dudding, or his stupid scrapes, or anything that is said or done in the lower school, I should like to know?" said Lyon.

"Let us hear about the row," said Wilson.

"Why, don't you remember, two mornings ago, when Dudding could not read his verse in the chapter at prayers, and spelt a word five times over, and called out Je-o-pardy, and Wise told him to look out the word in a pronouncing dictionary, and bring him the meaning written out? Grey was away that day, and Dudding, who has a very little more idea of looking in a dictionary than a cow, came to Lyon to help him, and Lyon told him a cram that no one but Dudding could possibly have believed—that Je-o-pardy was a man's name, and that he was Emperor of Timbuctoo, in Asia Minor, and son of Cleopatra and Alfred the Great, and that he drove round the world in a chariot drawn by eight cream-colored horses, and two slatesful more of wonderful rubbish, all which Dudding copied out in his great, round hand, and handed it up to the Doctor this morning when he came into the lower school. The Doctor thought it a trick on him, and little Pricket says he *was* mad. Dudding got a caning, and ever so much Greek Testament to learn by heart, and I don't know what else."

"But I told you, Collins," said Lyon, looking annoyed, while every one else laughed, "I told you that the joke was not to go too far, and you promised to get the paper from Dudding, and not let him make a fool of himself with it to the Doctor."

"Oh! did I? I forgot," said Collins. "One can't be always thinking of Dudding; besides, you used not to trouble yourself about Dudding's canings. He is always making a fool of himself one way or another. What does it signify, unless, indeed, you are afraid of a sermon from Sidney Grey? Van Amburgh would be a good name for him, as he sets up to be a lion-tamer."

"Do hold your tongue, Collins," said Lyon. "When you begin to try to be witty it is more than any one can stand. You are always harping on one string. If we are to play at hockey let us begin."

"Well done, Lion, King of Beasts," cried some one, at a good hit in the course of the game.

"Call me by my proper name, can't you?" said Lyon, pettishly. Sidney's definition of king would keep recurring to his mind, and the reflections it brought with it were troublesome. The flower-seed has fallen into good ground, though the weeds springing up all round are doing their best to choke it.

"I'm such a fool, you see," said Dudding to Sidney, who was sitting by him in the deserted school-room, hearing him repeat his imposition for the twentieth time; "you see I'm such a fool." And Dudding folded his arms on the desk and laid his head disconsolately down upon them.

"You have conquered it now," said Sidney, encouragingly. "You know it quite perfectly, I think."

"Oh! never mind; it's not that," said Dudding, in a choked voice.

"What is it, then?" said Sidney, gently.

"Why, you see, I am, I really am, such a fool. Dr. Wise said so this morning, and Lyon says so, and Collins says so. When I say anything the fellows laugh; and when I sit still, and don't speak, they stare. You don't know what it is, Sidney Grey, to be like me. People pity you for being lame; and they never think how much worse it is to be a fool—to feel different from other people."

"As to being different from other people, I feel that too," said Sidney.

"But in such a different way. Would not I change with you? Would not I be lame, or ill, or anything but such a fool?"

"People often make mistakes when they call other people fools," said Sidney; "and yet there's something else I should like to say to you; you won't make a joke of it, I know."

"Make a joke—I? As if I could!" said Dudding.

"Well, then, it is only this: you know the meaning of the verses you have been saying, don't you? 'If any man lack wisdom,'—you know how it goes on."

"But that does not mean wisdom to learn lessons and understand things at school," said Dudding. "It means something about being religious, and getting to heaven, and that sort of thing."

"Does it?" said Sidney; "I always thought it meant exactly what it said."

"Do you think, then," said Dudding, eagerly, raising his head, "that it would do any good to ask Him about my stupidity, and my not understanding my lessons, and that? Do you think He would really help me to get on better?"

"You see what it says," says Sidney: "'Giveth to *all* men liberally.' It can't be that he would refuse to give it just to you."

"Why, no; I think not," said Dudding, slowly. And he began to collect his books and put them away in silence.

The seed had sunk deep into the ground, and many years after it was bearing fruit.

The first result of Sydney's plain speaking to Lyon was, that it appeared for a time to have checked their growing friendship. Lyon took very little notice of Sidney for a day or two, and instead of seeking him out on every occasion, as he had lately been accustomed to, he kept out of his way, and behaved as nearly as possible as if there was no such person in the school.

Foster and Collins, who had their own private reasons for wishing to lessen Sidney's influence in the school, saw this with pleasure, and flattered themselves that, for the future, Lyon would pay no more attention to his sayings and doings than to those of any other town boy. In this comfortable belief, Foster left the school for a fortnight's visit, but on his return he was greeted with news that showed him that in his absence affairs had taken a different turn.

Collins drew him aside, before he had well got into the playground, to inform him that a great deal had happened while he had been away. In the first place, there had been a row between the boarders and the town boys.

"Anything new?" asked Foster.

"Yes, something very new—not what you'll like to hear at all. The quarrel began with Sidney Grey. Lyon and Grey are greater friends than ever in consequence of it; and there will be no use in your saying anything against it. You must know in the first place, that Grey has got to the top of the first form, and been made head monitor."

"Not a very likely thing to bring him into favor with Lyon, one would have thought," said Foster.

"One would have thought not; especially as he interferes much more than any other ever did. For a day or two, Lyon said nothing, and seemed to take no notice; not even when Grey had the impudence to send his name up with several others, for talking at prayers, and leaving books about. Every one said Grey would get himself into serious trouble; and at last he did. On Saturday afternoon he interfered about something that King and Wycombe were saying or doing to little Pricket, and, of course, they would not be called to account by him. There was a great row down in the cricket-field. I don't know exactly what happened, for I did not come up till it was nearly over; but I believe Wycombe and King were going to duck Grey in the pond at the bottom of the field; and just as they were doing it, Lyon came up, and was tremendously angry about it. He gave Wycombe such a thrashing as he never had before in his life. Wycombe has been as crest-fallen as possible ever since, and scarcely dares speak above a whisper in Lyon's hearing."

"There's nothing new in that," said Foster; "there has been a quarrel between Lyon and Wycombe every half-year since I came, and Wycombe is always put down for a time; but Lyon tires directly of opposing him, and he always slips back into his old place in the end."

"Yes; but the new thing is, that this time Lyon says he is determined that he shall not slip back. He has given out that he means to put down all bullying. Wilson, and Stanley, and several more, have joined him. They uphold Grey in all his plans, and between them they are quite altering the school."

"What are you going to do?" said Foster, gloomily.

"Oh! I don't know," answered Collins; "swim with the tide, I suppose. One would not go against Lyon. I have always liked him better than any other fellow in the school, and I've said, over and over again, that Wycombe and King wanted putting down; only, if Lyon did not think it necessary to interfere, why should any one else? It's nothing to me."

"It is to me, though," said Foster. "We all know what Lyon is when he takes up with any one, and if he is to follow Sidney Grey in everything there will be no peace for any one."

"No more cribbing from Key to Ellis for you, you mean, or copying your verses over Lyon's shoulder, and your translations from his books. By-the-bye, I heard Grey giving that as a reason to Lyon for not leaving his exercise books always throwing about," said Collins.

"How spiteful! as if it mattered to him," said Foster.

"He said, only fancy, that it was tempting you to dishonesty. You will have to turn over a new leaf, and do your work yourself, unless you can get round Grey, and persuade him to grow as blind as other monitors have done. You will have to be civil with him now."

"No use whatever. He is just as obstinate and unreasonable about things he has taken into his head as possible. I gave him a hint one day, when Martin had trusted him with the keys of his desk, and I wanted desperately to get hold of the Key to Ellis for one minute, and he looked enough to make a fellow"—

"Ashamed of himself," said Collins, gravely. "After all, it is a strange thing. Here is a poor, sickly fellow, that any one in the school could knock down with his finger; and to hear us talk, one would think we were all afraid of him, or ashamed before him. What's the reason, I wonder?"

CHAPTER IX.
THE HILL DIFFICULTY.

"Amy," said Charlotte, one morning, as she came down to breakfast, "here's the key of Aunt Ellice's closet. I found it on the shelf, under the wash-hand stand, in the boys' room. Sarah says she desires you will always bring it back to her after you have been to that closet to get anything out for Aunt Ellice. She wanted it terribly yesterday, and she made me look for it an hour and a half while you were out."

"*Made* you," said Edward.

"Yes," said Charlotte, resolutely, but coloring; "I mean that she told me to do it, and I did it."

"An instance," said Amy, negligently putting the key down upon the table, "of the trouble people give themselves by over particularity."

"Of the trouble people give other people, by want of particularity, you mean," said Edward.

"No," said Amy; "I mean that Sarah gives herself and every one else trouble by her particularity about locking and unlocking that closet. I can't tell you the quantity of time I lose every day in looking for that key; and what is the use of it? She does not suppose, I hope, that we would any of us, steal Aunt Ellice's oranges and apples, and biscuits."

"I should hope not," said Sidney and Edward together.

For once Charlotte had nothing to say; she looked down on the ground, and seemed absorbed in fitting her foot into a triangle in the pattern of the carpet.

"Eating apples used not to be called stealing at home," said Frank, in rather a sulky voice.

"But I suppose," said Edward, "it is not necessary to think for half an hour to find out that gathering apples with papa's leave in our own orchard, is a very different thing from taking apples without leave from Aunt Ellice's closet."

Frank helped himself to a piece of bread and butter while Edward was speaking, and appeared to give his whole attention to his breakfast, and Edward returned to his Latin grammar which he had the unsociable habit of learning at breakfast-time; and so the conversation dropped. Amy left the key behind her, under the edge of the tray, when she got up from the breakfast-table; but Charlotte followed her to the door of the room with it, and put it in her hand. "If it does not trouble you very much, Amy," she said, "I certainly do wish you would take a little more care of this key."

"It does trouble me very much," said Amy, with a resigned air. "Really with so many little things always to think of, I am almost harassed to death."

"How I do dislike Amy when she puts on that fine lady air, and talks of being harassed," said Edward, looking up, as his sister left the room. "You and I, Sidney, had better make haste and set off for school; there is a strong east wind blowing through the house, this morning. Charlotte, your face is turning blue; we shall have you talking of being harassed next."

"I shan't talk about it to you at all events," said Charlotte, angrily. "Whatever trouble Amy and I may have—however many disagreeable things we may be obliged to do—you never care; you never do a single thing to help. Just like boys!"

"Just like girls! they never can do the least thing without grumbling and talking about it."

"When did I ever grumble or talk about anything I did for you, I should like to know?" said Charlotte.

"And when did I give you or Amy unnecessary trouble, I should like to know?" said Edward.

"Have you forgotten the walnut-shells yesterday, after dinner?" cried Charlotte.

"No," said Edward, "nor all your scolding for having to pick them up."

A loud noise of something falling on the stairs cut short Charlotte's angry answer. She and Edward both ran to see if anything was the matter, and found Sidney sitting on the bottom step, with a heap of books and tools, which he had been carrying, scattered round him. When Charlotte's exclamations would let him speak, he confessed to having fallen down, and hurt himself a little.

"No wonder!" groaned Charlotte. "Why will you go toiling up and down stairs with such heaps of books? They are not yours, either. Surely you might have let Edward carry up his own tools."

"Things accumulate so if no one collects them," said Sidney, deprecatingly, "and I really could have carried them very well, if I had gone on steadily; but I tried to turn back when I had got up a few steps, because I thought I heard"—

"Us quarrelling," said Charlotte. "I'll tell you what, Sidney; I have sometimes wished since we came here, that you would go away somewhere out of our hearing, that we might all quarrel with each other in peace, and be ill tempered and disagreeable without having you to look sorry, and make one repent the minute after."

"There has been plenty of quarrelling, and being disagreeable in spite of Sidney's being here, lately," said Edward gruffly; "quite enough, I think."

"We were all going on so happily, a short time ago," said Sidney, "just after Aunt Ellice told us that story."

"All the good has gone again, now," said Charlotte; "and yet I am sure, if Edward would not be so excessively—"

"Come, now, don't begin again," said Edward.

"Besides, it is school-time," said Sidney, getting up with difficulty; "we must go."

"I will take care how you have another chance of tumbling down stairs with my tool-box," said Edward.

"And I with the books," said Charlotte. "I know I ought to have put them away before."

"It will be quite worth tumbling down for, if you do," said Sidney. "It will save us the number of disputes we have every day about who should, and who should not put things away."

To be Continued.